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Author Diane Asitimbay Reveals How Americans Look to Outsiders in New Book, “What’s Up America?”

SAN DIEGO – San Diego author Diane Asitimbay will talk on the common embarrassing and difficult questions that foreigners ask Americans on Wednesday, Jan. 24 at 6:30 p.m. in the Wangenheim Room at the Central Library, located at 820 E St. in downtown San Diego.

Asitimbay says she drew on her own experience as an English teacher easing international students into American life to write her book, “What’s Up America?” – a guide that records foreigners’ questions spanning two decades and their clashing lifestyles.

The book, which is based on the real questions that her international students and friends have asked her, won a “Fresh Voices” travel finalist award this year. In her book, Asitimbay takes her readers on a long road trip across the U.S., stopping along the way to discuss cultural aspects of the country’s immense landscape.

Asitimbay, who was born and raised in Detroit but has lived a good part of her life in New York City and San Diego, says that no matter what country her international students are from, they have asked the same questions over the years – prompting her to answer them in “What’s Up America?”

“This is a very personal book. I wrote this book as if we were chatting about the U.S. over a cup of coffee. It’s how I explain things about my country to my international students and friends when they ask me these difficult questions,” she says.

Asitimbay said she knew well what it was like to feel a complete stranger in a foreign land. She lived in Mexico City for two and a half years and worked as a reporter on an English daily newspaper.

Asitimbay, who is well-traveled and learned Spanish as an adult, says her book is for Americans, oo. She says it’s time for us to recognize the need for cultural competency and geographic literacy if we are to compete in the global marketplace.

Copies of her book will be for sale and will be signed by the author. For more information about the film showing, call the Central Library at 619-236-5800 or visit the Library’s web site at www.sandiegolibrary.org.

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